

**RULES
OF THE
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL**

**CHAPTER 1120-10
DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1120-10-.01	Purpose	1120-10-.05	Causes for Disciplinary Action
1120-10-.02	Policy	1120-10-.06	Examples of Disciplinary Offenses
1120-10-.03	Minimum Due Process		
1120-10-.04	Exception to Minimum Due Process	1120-10-.07	Progressive Disciplinary Action

1120-10-.01 PURPOSE. To establish standards for the application of disciplinary procedures which will assure fairness and uniformity among agencies and institutions subject to the provisions of these rules.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203 and T.C.A. 8-30-204. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988.

1120-10-.02 POLICY. A career employee may be warned, suspended, demoted or dismissed by his appointing authority whenever just or legal cause exists. The degree and kind of action is at the discretion of the appointing authority, but must be in compliance with the intent of the provisions of this rule and the Act. An executive service employee serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203, T.C.A. 8-30-204, T.C.A. 8-30-318, T.C.A. 8-30-325 and T.C.A. 8-30-326. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988

1120-10-.03 MINIMUM DUE PROCESS.

- (1) Career employees have a "property right" to a position in the classification in which they currently hold career status. Therefore, no suspension, demotion, dismissal or any other action which deprives a regular (career) employee of his "property right" will become effective until minimum due process is provided as outlined below.
- (2) Minimum due process consists of the following:
 - (a) The employee shall be notified of the charges against him . Such notification shall detail times, places, and other pertinent facts concerning the charges and should be in writing.
 - (b) The notification will provide for the employee to have a predecision discussion with an appropriate manager and will state the mechanism through which such a discussion may be arranged. The employee should be given a reasonable period of time to prepare to answer charges and present information which might influence the manager's decision.
 - (c) The manager conducting such discussions must be an appointing authority or manager who has direct access to an appointing authority for this purpose.

(Rule 1120-10-.03, continued)

- (d) The meeting outlined above shall be for the purpose of allowing the employee to present information to the manager regarding the disciplinary action under consideration.
 - (e) The discussion shall be informal. The employees shall have the right to present written statements of witnesses or any other information with regard to the charges. Attendance and participation by persons other than the manager and the employee shall be at the discretion of the manager.
 - (f) If the employee declines the opportunity to have the discussion or present information, the provisions of this section are deemed to have been met.
- (3) The commission shall determine as a preliminary matter to the merits of a grievance, a grievant's allegation that he or she was denied minimum due process.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203, T.C.A. 8-30-204 and T.C.A. 8-30-331. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988.

1120-10-.04 EXCEPTION TO MINIMUM DUE PROCESS. When an employee is acting in a dangerous or otherwise threatful manner and must be removed from the workplace immediately, it is not necessary to provide "minimum due process" prior to removal. Minimum due process must be provided after removal as soon as practicable. The employee, in this case, may be placed on leave or on immediate suspension without pay.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203 and T.C.A. 8-30-204. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988

1120-10-.05 CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION. Causes for disciplinary action fall into two categories.

- (1) Causes relating to performance of duties.
- (2) Causes relating to conduct which may affect an employee's ability to successfully fulfill the requirements of the job.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203 and T.C.A. 8-30-204. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988

1120-10-.06 EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES. The following causes are examples of those considered for disciplinary action and should not be considered the only causes of action.

- (1) Inefficiency or incompetency in the performance of duties.
- (2) Negligence in the performance of duties.
- (3) Careless, negligent or improper use of State property or equipment.
- (4) Failure to maintain satisfactory and harmonious working relationships with the public and fellow employees.
- (5) Habitual improper use of sick leave privileges.
- (6) Habitual pattern of failure to report for duty at the assigned time and place.

(Rule 1120-10-.06, continued)

- (7) Failure to obtain or maintain a current license or certificate or other qualification required by law or rule as a condition of continued employment.
- (8) Gross misconduct or conduct unbecoming an employee in the State service.
- (9) Conviction of a felony.
- (10) Willful abuse or misappropriation of State funds, property or equipment.
- (11) Falsification of an official document relating to or affecting employment.
- (12) Participation in any action that would in any way seriously disrupt or disturb the normal operation of the agency, institution, department or any other segment of the State service or that would interfere with the ability of management to manage.
- (13) Trespassing on the property of any State officer or employee for the purpose of harassment.
- (14) Damage or destruction of State property.
- (15) Acts that would endanger the lives and property of others.
- (16) Possession of unauthorized firearms, lethal weapons, alcohol or illegal drugs on the job.
- (17) Brutality in the performance of duties.
- (18) Refusal to accept a reasonable and proper assignment from an authorized supervisor (insubordination).
- (19) Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or partaking of such on the job.
- (20) Sleeping or failure to remain alert during duty hours.
- (21) Betrayal of confidential information.
- (22) Garnishment of wages for more than one indebtedness.
- (23) Political activity prohibited by T.C.A. Title 2, Chapter 19 (The Little Hatch Act)
- (24) For the good of the service as outlined in T.C.A. 8-30-326.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-203, T.C.A. 8-30-202 and T.C.A. 8-30-203. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988. Amendment filed May 6, 1996; effective July 20, 1996.

1120-10-.07 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

- (1) The supervisor is responsible for maintaining the proper performance level, conduct and discipline of the employees under his supervision. When corrective action is necessary, the supervisor must administer disciplinary action beginning at the appropriate step as described.
- (2) *Oral Warning.* The supervisor will meet privately with the employee to:
 - (a) Review with the employee exactly what is expected on the job and why.

(Rule 1120-10-.07, continued)

- (b) Explain to the employee how he has not met requirements and why present conduct or performance is unacceptable.
 - (c) Allow the employee to give reasons for his actions or failure.
 - (d) Make suggestions for correction.
 - (e) Record the date of the discussion and other necessary information for future reference.
 - (f) Written follow-up to the discussion may be forwarded to the employee but is not required. Written follow-up to an oral warning should not be construed as a written warning as described below and will not become part of the employee's official personnel file.
- (3) *Written Warning.* The supervisor will meet with the employee and:
 - (a) Review the points covered in the oral warning, if an oral warning(s) was administered. The employee will be told that a significant change in his present conduct or performance must be made.
 - (b) Tell the employee he will receive a letter covering the significant points of the discussion to include:
 - 1. What has been expected and how these expectations have not been met.
 - 2. Suggestions for improvement.
 - 3. Indication that failure to improve will lead to further disciplinary action.
 - (c) Review with the organizational unit head the contents of the letter prior to its delivery to the employee by the supervisor.
 - (d) A copy of the written warning may be placed in the employee's official personnel file in the agency personnel office at the discretion of the appointing authority. Any written warning which has been issued to an employee shall be automatically expunged from the employee's personnel file after a period of two (2) years from the date of the letter; provided, that the employee has had no further disciplinary actions with respect to the same area of performance, conduct, and discipline.
- (4) *Suspension Without Pay.*
 - (a) After minimum due process is provided, a suspension without pay may be issued by the appointing authority for one (1) to thirty (30) days. No employee may be suspended without pay for disciplinary purposes for more than thirty (30) days in any consecutive twelve (12) month period. Suspensions with or without pay of more than thirty (30) days may be issued pending the outcome of an investigation or legal action with approval of the Commissioner.
 - (b) Before issuance, a written notice of the suspension without pay will be prepared. The notice will contain an account of the circumstances which led to the decision to issue the suspension, the beginning and ending dates of the suspension and information to the employee concerning his rights of appeal as outlined in Chapter 1120-11 of these rules. A copy of the notice will be placed in the employee's official personnel file and a copy will be sent to the Department.
- (5) *Dismissal.*

(Rule 1120-10-.07, continued)

- (a) After minimum due process is provided, an employee may be dismissed by the appointing authority from his position for unacceptable conduct or performance of duties.
 - (b) Before an employee is dismissed, a written notification detailing the circumstances leading to the decision to dismiss will be prepared. The notice will indicate the effective date and inform the employee of his rights to appeal as outlined in Chapter 1120-11 of these rules. A copy of the notice will be placed in the employee's official personnel file and a copy will be sent to the Department.
 - (c) Before an employee can be dismissed, he must be given ten (10) calendar days paid notice. During the notice period an employee will not be required to report for duty. The employee's accumulated annual leave balance may be used during this notice period only if dismissal was for gross misconduct.
- (6) *Transfer or Demotion.* If it is determined by the appointing authority that an employee's ability to satisfactorily perform his duties is beyond the capabilities of the employee or the employee has been compromised by notorious conduct to the extent that he is ineffective in his position, the employee may be demoted or transferred to a position that is more appropriate after minimum due process has been provided.

Authority: T.C.A. 8-30-202, T.C.A. 8-30-203, T.C.A. 8-30-204, T.C.A. 8-30-318, T.C.A. 8-30-325, T.C.A. 8-30-326 and T.C.A. 8-30-330. **Administrative History:** (For history prior to January 2, 1988 see pages 1-2). Repeal and new rule filed November 18, 1987; effective January 2, 1988. Amendment filed August 25, 1994; effective December 29, 1994. Amendment filed October 25, 1995; effective February 28, 1996.